

**Uniting Church in Australia**  
**ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE**

**VIA ZOOM**

**10 – 12 November 2023**

**PRESENT** Sharon Hollis (President), James Aaron, Sandy Boyce, David Busch, Michael Dobson, David Fotheringham, Colleen Geyer, Mark Kickett, Richard La'Brooy, Nicole Mugford, Alison Overeem, Deidre Palmer, Catherine Pepper, Roberta Stanley, Charissa Suli, Lilliani Tahaafe-Williams, Geoff Thompson, Yuko Tonai-Moore, Anna Wilson, Kerry Wilson, Stuart Woodward.

**In attendance:** Jenny Bertalan, Lindsay Cullen, Jane Fry, Philip Gardner, Mark Lawrence, Adam McIntosh and Andrew Williams.

**AGENDA DISCUSSION**

The elected members of the Assembly Standing Committee gathered online on Friday afternoon to discuss the Agenda of the meeting. The President led this conversation.

**WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The President and participants acknowledged the First Peoples of the land on which they were. The President welcomed Leo Iosifidis for matters related to the Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee report, Risk Management report, Rob Floyd and Lisa Sampson for matters related to the Frontier Services Report, John Cox and David de Kock for matters related to the National Safe Church Unit Scope Change; Andrew Johnson for matters related to the Act2 Report, Leo Iosifidis, John Graves and Gillian Coutts for matters related to the UCA Assembly Limited Annual General Meeting.

**WORSHIP** On the Friday night the President led worship and the closing prayer on Friday and Saturday night were offered through The Examen video, David Busch led the Saturday morning worship, the Sunday morning worship was delivered by Charissa Suli and James Aaron and the closing prayers were offered by Colleen Geyer.

**APOLOGIES**

**23.49** **It was resolved** to receive the apology of Linda Driver for Sunday morning, Michael Dobson for Saturday afternoon, Alison Overeem for Friday, Adam McIntosh for Sunday and Roberta Stanley for the whole meeting.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The General Secretary spoke to the agenda and timetable as listed in Document 1.

**23.50** **It was resolved to** approve the timetable and agenda of the meeting as outlined in Document 1, noting that the committee is free to vary the agenda at any time.

## CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- 23.51 It was resolved to:**
- 23.51.01 confirm the minutes of the meeting held 21 – 23 July 2023 as amended at the meeting;
- 23.51.02 confirm the minutes of the meeting meeting held 8 October 2023; and
- 23.51.03 approve that ASC minute 23.48 be deemed confidential and not be included in the October 2023 minutes that are published on the website

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest was declared.

## NOTE CONSTITUTION CLAUSE 39

The Standing Committee members were reminded of the Constitution clause 39, as per ASC minute 00.71:

*“On matters which, by a two thirds majority vote, the Assembly deems to be vital to the life of the Church, the Assembly shall seek the concurrence of the Synods and/or Presbyteries and/or Congregations as the Assembly may determine.”*

## PRESIDENT’S REPORT

The ex-President took the chair while the President spoke to Document 4, consisting of a report on her activities since the October 2023 meeting of the Standing Committee.

- 23.52 It was resolved** to receive the report (Attachment A).

## UAICC REPORT

Mark Kickett presented Document 4, consisting of a report on the conversations UAICC had and the actions they took.

- 23.53 It was resolved** to receive the report. (Attachment B)

## BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

### 1. Assembly General Secretary Recruitment (ASC Minute 23.38.03)

The ex-President took the chair while the President introduced Document 16, consisting of a proposal regarding the members of the Nominating Committee for recruitment of the next General Secretary.

- 23.54 It was resolved to:**
- 23.54.01 endorse the following to be the members of the General Secretary Nominating Committee:  
Philip Gardiner  
Sandy Boyce  
David Busch  
Mark Dingle; and

23.54.02 authorise the Assembly Officers to make any further appointments to the Assembly General Secretary JNC as necessary.

## **2. Church in the Digital Age Report (ASC Minutes 23.08.02 and 23.08.03)**

Lindsay Cullen presented Document 17, consisting of a report on learnings from the ongoing use of digital and hybrid settings for worship and in communications and community building.

### **23.55 It was resolved to:**

23.55.01 receive the report; and

23.55.02 note the recommendations for action contained in the report and request the Associate General Secretary to facilitate these actions.

## **3. LGBTIQA+ Apology Task Group Report (ASC Minute 23.31.02)**

Lin Hatfield-Dodds, introduced Document 15, consisting of a report on the work of the Task Group in response to the resolutions of the March and July 2023 meetings of the Assembly Standing Committee, specifically the Task Group's advice on developing the words of an apology.

### **23.56 It was resolved to:**

23.56.01 receive the report;

23.56.02 request the Task Group to provide a report on the consultation not later than 11 December 2023 ; and

23.56.03 request the General Secretary to convey the tone and discussion of the Task Group report.

## **FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES**

### **1. Act2 Report**

Andrew Johnson presented Document 14, consisting of a report on the work and process of the Act2 project.

**23.57 It was resolved to** receive the report.

### **2. Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee**

Stuart Woodward and Leo Iosifidis spoke to Document 7 consisting of a report on the management of finance, audit and risk issues across the Assembly.

### **23.58 It was resolved to:**

23.58.01 receive the report; and

23.58.02 note the satisfactory finalisation of the June 2023 Audit of Annual Financial Statements.

### **3. Assembly Risk Management**

Leo Iosifidis and Lindsay Cullen presented Document 8, consisting of an update to the Risk Management System and Framework of the Assembly. Documents 8A, 8B and 8C contained the risk appetite statement,

dashboard/heatmap reporting of risks, risk register from the July 2023 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee and the Assembly Standing Committee's risk governance principles. Table group discussion followed.

**23.59**            **It was resolved to** receive the report.

#### **4. Frontier Services Report**

Lisa Sampson and Rob Floyd spoke to Documents 9 and 9A, consisting of a governance update from Frontier Services and nominations for the Frontier Services Board membership.

**23.60**            **It was resolved to:**

23.60.01        receive the report;

23.60.02        appoint Renata Paliskis and Stephen Webster to the Frontier Services Board effective immediately; and

23.60.03        appoint Rev Andrew Syme to the Frontier Services Board effective January 1 2024.

#### **5. General Secretary Report**

The General Secretary presented Document 5, consisting of a report on the Assembly's progress against Strategic Plan, operations and issues relevant to its work.

**23.61**            **It was resolved to** receive the report.

#### **6. National Safe Church Unit Change of Scope**

John Cox spoke to Document 6, consisting of a report on the review of National Safe Church Unit and a request to seek endorsement for matters related to repositioning the National Safe Church Unit and its deliverables.

**23.62**            **It was resolved to:**

23.62.01        receive the report; and

23.62.02        endorse:

- the changes to the National Safe Church Unit Charter as shown in Appendix 1 to the report
- transition to the adoption of National Standards as per Appendices 2-4 to the report
- continuation of the cost sharing model which underpins the National Safe Church Unit staffing model of three full time employees
- the discipline of semi-annual review and reporting of the national Safeguarding work.

#### **7. Net Zero Emissions Working Group Report**

Lindsay Cullen introduced Documents 12 and 12A, consisting of a progress report from the Working Group and an Expression of Interest.

**23.63**            **It was resolved to:**

23.63.01        receive the report; and

23.63.02        approve Michael Mathias as a member of the Net Zero Steering Committee.

## **8. UCA Assembly Ltd Board Nominations**

Leo Iosifidis, John Graves and Gillian Coutts presented Document 13, consisting of a proposal to appoint new members to the UCA Assembly Ltd. Board.

### **23.64 It was resolved to:**

23.64.01 approve the appointment of Dale K. Ham to the UCA Assembly Ltd Board in line with the UCA Assembly Ltd Constitution; and

23.64.02 approve the appointment of David Cousins to the UCA Assembly Ltd Board Board in line with the UCA Assembly Ltd Constitution.

## **9. UnitingCare Australia 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The General Secretary spoke to Document 10, consisting of a report on the 30th Anniversary of UnitingCare Australia and a recommendation that the Assembly Standing Committee seek a formal acknowledgement of the Anniversary at the 17th Triennial Assembly.

### **23.65 It was resolved to:**

23.65.01 receive the report; and

23.65.02 bring the following recommendation to the 17<sup>th</sup> Triennial Assembly: "acknowledges the 30th Anniversary of UnitingCare Australia, recognising their faithful service and advocacy over many years."

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **1. Appointment of Assembly General Secretary (Interim)**

The ex-President took the Chair. The President introduced Document 19, consisting of a proposal to appoint a General Secretary for the interim period until the Assembly appoints a General Secretary following the resignation of the current General Secretary.

### **23.66 It was resolved to:**

23.66.01 receive the report; and

23.66.02 advise the President to appoint Rev Lindsay Cullen to the role of General Secretary until an appointment is made by the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

### **2. Minute of Appreciation**

The ex-President took the Chair. The President spoke to Document 18, consisting of a proposal to record a minute of appreciation for the Assembly General Secretary, Colleen Geyer.

**23.67 It was resolved to** record the Assembly Standing Committee's deep gratitude for the ministry of Colleen Geyer as Assembly General Secretary.

### **3. Project Possum**

**23.68 It was resolved to** request the General Secretary to bring a report to the March 2024 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee regarding the progress and status of Project Possum.

#### **4. Proposal from the Synod of South Australia**

The General Secretary presented Document 20, consisting of a proposal from the Synod of South Australia regarding justice and rights for Palestinians and peace with Israel.

**23.69 It was resolved to:**

- 23.69.01 note the resolution from the Synod of South Australia relating to *Justice and rights for Palestinians and peace with Israel*;
- 23.69.02 note the statement from the World Council of Churches, statement 'Seeking Justice and Peace for all in the Middle-East' of the World Council of Churches (WCC) 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany in September 2022;
- 23.69.03 request the General Secretary to communicate Resolution 23.07.04 from the Synod of South Australia to the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA); encouraging the NCCA to continue to work with member Churches to advocate for the people of Palestine/Israel and the restoration of rights for Palestinians living in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza; and noting that the WCC General Secretary, Prof Dr Jerry Pillay will attend the NCCA .

#### **5. 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly Report**

The General Secretary introduced Document 11, consisting of an update on the preparations for the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly and on the progress on all resolutions from the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

**23.70 It was resolved to:**

- 23.70.01 receive the report;
- 23.70.02 appoint the following people to the Business Committee for the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly:  
Heather den Houting (Chair)  
Assembly General Secretary (Interim)  
Charissa Suli  
Sharon Hollis  
Convenor, Facilitation Team  
Jane Fry; and
- 23.70.03 a) add an extra person who is lay person; and  
b) authorise the Assembly Officers to nominate this person.

#### **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 4:00pm with prayer led by Colleen Geyer.

#### **DATES FOR 2024**

**15 – 17 MARCH 2024**

**30 AUGUST – 1 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**22 - 24 NOVEMBER 2024**